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THE BAPTIST

Record

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Needy refugee families flooding Europe

WESTERN EUROPE (BP) — Every family has a story. For Afghan families crowding the refugee centers served by Southern Baptist mission workers in Europe, it's usually a sad one.

Here's an example: An ethnic Hazara woman, once a teacher, was hit twice by Taliban bullets as she fled the Afghan capital of Kabul. She survived — barely — in her home village.

She couldn't seek medical treatment, since no male doctors under the Taliban were allowed to see a woman's body, much less touch it. Any women doctors were exiled to their homes long ago.

Her husband, a well-to-do businessman, was arrested two years ago. The Taliban demanded a high ransom for his freedom. She paid it, but her husband never returned.

Instead, another group of Taliban thugs came in the night, demanding to know where he was. When the woman's 12-year-old son insisted

his father was still in jail, they shouted, "You lie!" and threatened to cut off his feet.

They left after terrorizing the family, beating the boy, and jabbing a bayonet into his knee. He's been traumatized ever since, the woman says, wiping away tears.

She paid a smuggler to take her into Pakistan the same week terrorists attacked New York and Washington. Then she flew to a Western European country, not named for security reasons.

Today she sits in a narrow room in a nondescript, four-story dormitory, waiting for a decision on her asylum application. She asks that her name not be used; the Taliban may be on the run in Afghanistan, but she still fears for the lives of her relatives there.

Her nine-year-old daughter stays close by her side, gripping her with one arm and a teddy bear with the other. Her son offers a crooked smile, but has a faraway look in his eyes.

His knee bears the red scar of the bayonet. Three other children remain in Afghanistan, hiding in the mountains with their grandmother.

Is the woman's husband alive or dead? Only the Taliban knows. They took his brother, too, but eventually freed him — after putting his eyes out. "They beat him so badly he couldn't move any part of his body," she says of the brother, adding sadly, "I know nothing of my husband."

Such stories are as common as despair among the thousands of refugees flocking to this European country for sanctuary.

They come not only from Afghanistan but many other places people flee because of war, oppression, ethnic turmoil, or other miseries: Iraqis, Iranians, Palestinians, Algerians, Kurds, Azerbaijanis, Syrians, Chechens, Gypsies, even Burmese.

They arrive by plane, in the backs of trucks, inside crates and rat-infested ship holds.

"One of the best things we can do is listen to their stories," says Andrew (not his real

name), an International Mission Board worker who spends most days among the refugees. "They just need someone to listen."

They need a lot more than that, and Andrew and his co-workers provide a lot more. Listening is a start.

Andrew, a 32-year-old single missionary, has heard and seen some painful things in the centers, like the Iraqi man who bared his chest to display an intricate pattern of circular burn marks from torture, or the Chechen who stared with dead

eyes and said, "Killing people makes you cold."

He's also heard Iranian young men eagerly ask, "Can you tell me about Jesus?" and a little Uzbek girl say, "I love God!" after inviting Christ into her heart.

"It's so open," Andrew says. "You can share the gospel with all these unreached people groups without worrying about getting arrested."

Andrew prays for power as he drives into refugee centers, the back of his minivan loaded with clothing, food, toys, and Bibles in various languages. The kids come running first, shouting "Mr. Andrew! Mr. Andrew!" and jumping into his arms. Parents and other adults follow. His visits count among the few bright spots in their often-gloomy days.

He's even broken up a few fights between members of rival ethnic groups.

"Andrew is a very good man," says an Afghan whose father was beaten to death by the Taliban. "He helps us."

"Arabic Bibles go like hotcakes," Andrew reports. "We've probably given out hundreds of them."

If and when the refugee families do return home, some will be carrying those Bibles and the Gospel back to their peoples. That's the ultimate goal of the ministry.

Meanwhile, the families just keep coming.

MAKING DO — Living in a single room with six children isn't easy for "Shanaz" (right) at a refugee center in Western Europe. But it beats life in Afghanistan under the Taliban. "I will go back when there is no fighting," she vows. Until then, she asks, "Please pray for me, my husband and my family." Her husband is missing in Afghanistan. (BP photo by Matt Jones)

MOTHER AND DAUGHTER — Before the Taliban's reign of terror, "Shanaz," 35, studied law in Afghanistan. Her daughter "Lima," 12, never even saw the inside of a school. As women, both were forced to stay home by the Taliban. Now a refugee in Europe, at least Lima can attend classes. "The teacher says I have very intelligent children," her mother reports with pride. (BP photo by Matt Jones)

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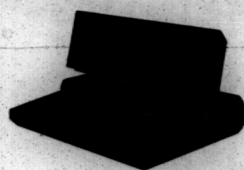
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HELPING WITH CHORES — "Ahmad," an 11-year-old Afghan, pitches in on chores in the community kitchen at a European refugee center where Southern Baptist missionaries aid many families. (BP photo by Matt Jones)

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The great escape

After (Paul and Silas) had been severely flogged, they were thrown into prison and the jailer was commanded to guard them carefully. Upon receiving such orders, he put them in the inner cell and fastened their feet in the stocks.

About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everybody's chains came loose. (Acts 16:23-26 NIV)

They arrested the apostles and put them in the public jail. But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the doors of the jail and brought them out. (Acts 5:18-19 NIV)

Surely the spectacular freeing of the Lord's people from the prisons and jails of their first-century oppressors ranks near the top of the list of miraculous deliverances in the Bible. Time and again the starkest, most secure jails and prisons of the early New Testament era failed to hold a few simple men within their walls.

The authorities of the day — both Roman and Jewish — were quite familiar with the cruel effectiveness of their prisons and jails when it came to snuffing out new movements that threatened the political and religious status quo.

Try as they might, however, the authorities simply couldn't contain the Good News of Jesus Christ with their jails and prisons. The early Believers must have been emboldened beyond measure by these occurrences, which were no doubt instrumental in establishing the hard-fought foothold sought by those early Christians in their hostile society.

As we struggle today to gain a foothold in our own hostile society, we can be emboldened by the idea that it's one thing to read about 2,000-year-old deliverances,

but it's quite another to see the same scenario unfold before our own modern eyes.

Christian aid workers Heather Mercer and Dayna Curry were arrested in August of this year in Afghanistan for the act of giving away a child's book containing information about Jesus. In that radically Islamic country, this was a capital offense.

Arrested along with the two American women were six Germans and a host of native Afghans who were directly or indirectly assisting them in their relief work. While most of the world's attention became focused on freeing the "Afghanistan Eight" foreigners, as they came to be known, the fate of the Afghan Christians who were assisting them was all but sealed.

The situation was grim, but then God stepped in.

As Northern Alliance fighters neared their prison in Kabul under air cover provided by the United States, the eight foreigners quickly became hostages and were forced to flee the city with their captors.

After a harrowing cross-country escape that included spending the night in a shipping container, the hostages were placed in an abandoned jail under armed Taliban guard.

Some time later, they heard footsteps approaching and feared it could be the end for them at the hands of the Taliban. What they didn't know was that their guards had slipped away, and the footsteps they heard were Northern Alliance fighters searching the building.

The hostages were freed without a fight and whisked to safety in the middle of the night by U.S. Special Forces helicopters. The only reported injury was a minor cut on the hand of one of the German hostages



as he ran to board the rescue helicopter.

It was after they reached Pakistan that the eight Christians learned their Afghan brothers in Christ had all managed to escape in the confusion of the Taliban's retreat from Kabul. They too were safe — every one of them.

For the sake of brevity, many of the details of this story have been omitted but it would be exceedingly difficult — yea, impossible — to list all the points along the way since last August where things could have gone terribly wrong and these precious lives could have been lost.

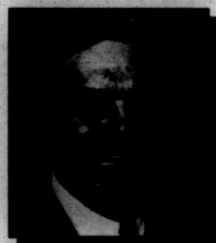
That didn't happen, however, and for those who would ask why, the answer is really quite simple.

After all these thousands of years, God is still in the miracle business.

FIRST PERSON:

Win a terrorist to Christ?

By Joe McKeever, pastor
First Church, Kenner, La.



KENNER, La. (BP) — This missionary ticked me off the other day. In a letter home to friends and supporters, this Christian worker in a heavily Muslim country (unnamed for security reasons) was making the point that we should not discriminate against all Arabs or Muslims for the work of a few terrorists.

Okay, I can see that. Then the missionary said, "After all, those terrorists lived in the United States for many months prior to the Sept. 11 tragedies. Why didn't your church lead them to Christ while they were living in your city?"

That's what stung. I have numerous reactions to that question, on various levels. First, I'm not sure that a terrorist on a suicide mission to kill hundreds of his enemies — my neighbors — is going to be a candidate for visiting my church and hearing the Gospel.

I mean, these guys are seriously disturbed. There are people on planet earth who cannot be reasoned with, and it would seem that terrorists poisoned with blind hatred would qualify. I keep recalling how the Lord Jesus said only little children could receive the Gospel.

On another level, I wonder if

my kind of Christianity would win a terrorist to the Lord Jesus Christ. There is an unwritten law in evangelism that you cannot win to Christ anyone more committed to his way of life than you are to the Lord.

In other words, I have to outlive and outlove and outdo him in my own commitment and sacrifice in order to earn his attention, and therein lies a problem.

In the first century, the early Christians were concerned about their own Osama bin Laden. His name was Saul and he was a holy terror to the followers of Jesus.

He participated in the execution of the first Christian martyr, Stephen, and with that taste of blood followed up with numerous other acts of terrorism. He even received permission to seek out believers in Syria, arrest them, and bring

them to Jerusalem for trial.

I wonder whether any believer said in a prayer meeting, "Let's pray for Saul to come to Christ and be saved." That would have seemed beyond the realm of possibility even to these people who had seen their share of miracles.

They would have been satisfied simply to be protected from his escapades, but heaven had bigger plans. All God needed was someone who could outlive and outlove and outdo Saul — maybe outdie him.

Enter Stephen. This charter member of the first deacon fellowship is described in Acts 6 as "full of grace and power."

Here was God's man for an incredible mission: win the terrorist. The seventh chapter of Acts tells of Stephen's death by stoning. Off to the side stood Saul watching the action, noting

Stephen's amazing behavior, guarding the coats of the rock-throwers, and congratulating them for their courage.

Saul threw no stones, but he was a witness that day. He saw the dying Stephen pray for his executioners and forgive them.

That day, Saul was bested. He finally met one more committed to Christ than he was committed against Christ. Saul was never the same man.

Eventually, on a road outside Damascus, God reeled him in. The rest is history.

Would my kind of faith and witness win that kind of enemy to the Lord? It's a question to drive me to my knees in prayer, and to stand up with a new determination not to be outlived and outdone by the likes of God's enemies.

This is a call to a real holy war: to love our enemies, to pray for them, and to lay down our lives if need be — whatever it takes for God to use us to win them.

This is, after all, how God destroys terrorists. He turns them into disciples.

Editor's note: McKeever is a former Mississippi pastor and church staffer. He also draws the editorial cartoons that are published in The Baptist Record.

Nat'l Guard seeking a few good chaplains

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (BP) — The Army National Guard needs more people like Lieutenant Colonel Bill Morgan of the 62nd Troop Command in Montgomery, Ala.

Specifically, the Army National Guard is in need of accredited ministers of divinity, at least 38 years old who meet the Army weight standards and can pass its physical fitness and medical exams.

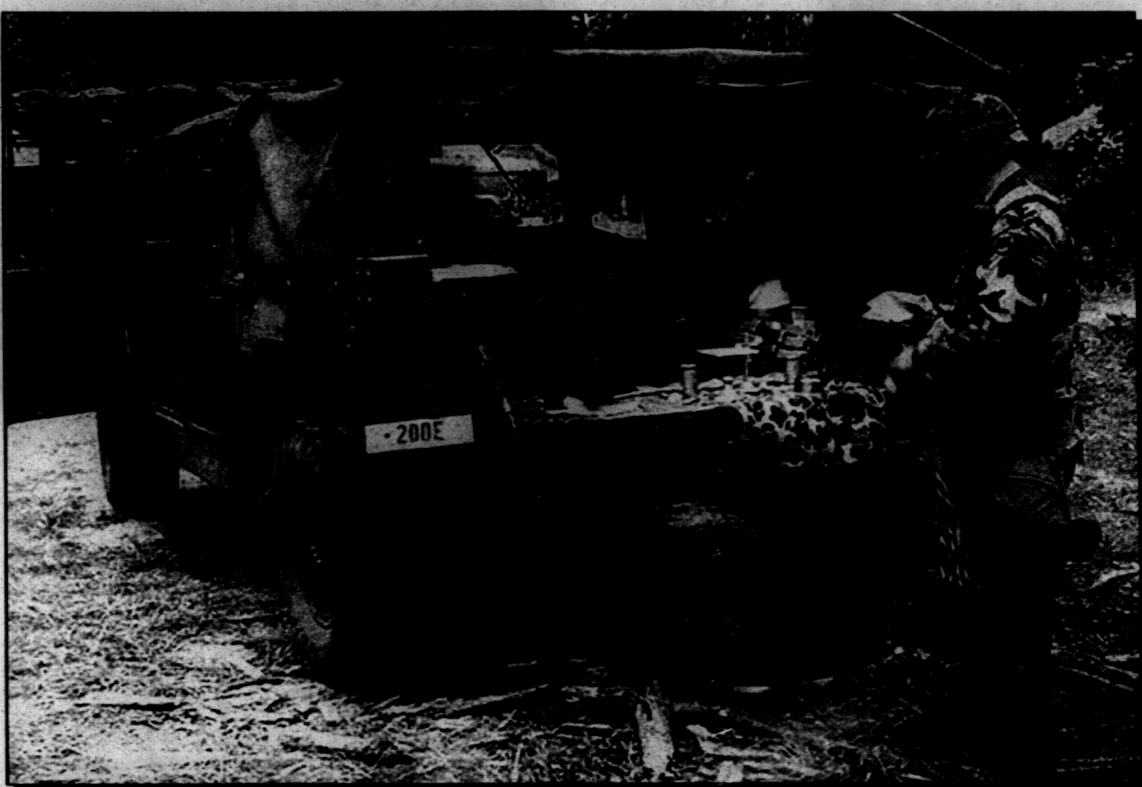
"We have a desperate need for chaplains in the Army National Guard," Morgan said.

Chaplains minister to soldiers and their families, conduct worship services in armories as well as in the field, and provide pastoral care to soldiers in crisis situations.

It's a job that Morgan has had for the past 30 years, even longer than his 24 years in the pastorate or the three years he has been serving as director of missions for the 29 churches in the Autauga Association.

It's been enough time for Morgan to be on active war duty — he served seven months in Saudi Arabia during Desert Storm — and more than enough time to learn the fine art of what Morgan characterizes as the essence of chaplaincy, "the ministry of presence."

"A chaplain," explained Morgan, "is a calming influence, even in storms, because of his anchor in Christ."



CHAPLAINS NEEDED — Bill Morgan, seen here in his role as an Army National Guard lieutenant colonel for the 62nd Troop Command in Montgomery, Ala., also is director of missions for the Autauga Association and an advocate of pastors joining the guard's ranks. (BP photo)

In his current chaplaincy position, Morgan oversees nine other chaplains, including a group chaplain, brigade chaplain, and battalion chaplains. He compares the battalion chaplains to pastors who minister to local churches.

"I like being long-term, relating with people who many times don't have good relationships with their churches because they're gone so much," Morgan said.

Chaplains establish relationships with soldiers in their units during monthly drills and annual training. During his latest drill, Morgan visited with a soldier stricken with cancer.

Because Morgan's unit is a command unit, the current war does not directly affect his min-

istry but whenever a unit is mobilized, a chaplain normally goes along with his unit.

As ministers, chaplains do not carry weapons or engage in combat but serve to help other soldiers cope with any fear.

Chaplains also serve on their commander's staff to insure the constitutional right of free expression of religion for all soldiers and to advise the commander on matters of ethics, morale, or other spiritual matters facing the unit.

During the Gulf War, Morgan and other chaplains helped advise commanders on the Muslim religion.

As units are mobilized, chaplains' ministries become extended, Morgan noted. "Then you're not just responsible for soldiers in your unit but those around you, too."

During war, military personnel operate with a heightened sense of life and death, Morgan said, but chaplains by nature of their role are already accustomed to it.

"I think that's one thing about a chaplain; they deal

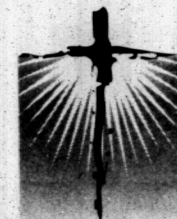
with life-and-death situations routinely," Morgan said.

Interest in spiritual matters always heightens during crises, Morgan said, but chaplains also minister to soldiers during high-risk training exercises such as ones conducted at Fort Benning, Ga.

Morgan said there are some common misconceptions about a National Guard chaplain's ministry, including the idea that chaplains are restricted in their messages.

"You're not," Morgan said, noting he has preached the same sermons to church congregations and, during drills, he has shared the FAITH Gospel presentation that is popular among churches.

The National Guard does not require a chaplain to leave the pulpit on Sundays during monthly drills if they are pastors of a local church. Therefore, Morgan encourages pastors who meet the requirements to enter the chaplaincy.



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THE
SECOND
FRONT PAGE

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Ministry reaching Chinese

BEIJING (BP) — Chinese tourists are returning home from their vacation trips to Southeast Asia with the best souvenir of all — the Good News of Jesus Christ. To assist them in understanding the way to salvation and God's purposes in their lives, Christians are giving Bibles and other valuable materials to mainland Chinese people who are vacationing in countries throughout Southeast Asia. Volunteers who have been involved in the initial stages of this literature distribution project have discovered that the Christian materials are received with eager hands and are perused with willing hearts. Several have reported decisions of salvation by those whom have received the materials and asked questions. Many of the recipients take the priceless books back home to share with friends and family. One person, among the earliest to receive a Bible through the project, accepted the Lord and returned to her home in China to begin a new church. To many of the tourists the Bibles, Jesus films, and other materials are precious gifts. Coming from a country where widespread distribution of religious material is closely monitored, they rejoice in the opportunity to receive the materials abroad. Many of the volunteers have already found that no matter how many materials they have, the demand exceeds the supply. One-fifth of the world's population, about 1.3 billion people, live in China where Bibles and other Christian materials are in short supply and hard to obtain because of government restrictions. Making the Bibles readily available to the people is the goal, said the volunteers. For information on volunteering for the project, contact [redacted]

Looking back

10 years ago

Paul Blanchard accepts the call to become director of missions for the Winston Association in Louisville. Prior to accepting the call, Blanchard was pastor of the Eulaton First Church in Anniston, Ala.

20 years ago

Armed with a 1980 Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) resolution calling for a legislated or constitutional ban on all abortions except to save the life of the mother, SBC president Adrian Rogers urges a Senate panel in Washington to pass legislation to stop abortions in the United States.

50 years ago

In response to an article by the editor opposing the appointment of an ambassador to the Vatican, a reader responds: "I am not a Catholic or a Baptist, but it seems to me you are trying to discriminate against people. Your article has a polecat flavor — a big polecat."

NAMB commissions 98 new missionaries

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. (BP) — Ron Stewart didn't particularly want to attend the local church revival services in 1971, but he went because a good friend had invited him.

As it turned out, Stewart — an avid amateur bowler — found himself at the church the same night nationally known pro bowler Fred Duncan had been invited to speak. He believes that was no coincidence.

"I don't think I would have listened to anybody else but him," Stewart said, "but I came to know the Lord Jesus Christ that night."

Stewart, now pastor/director of the New Life Mission ministry center in Hamilton, Ohio, was one of 98 North American Mission Board (NAMB) missionaries commissioned during a Sunday morning service at First Church in Daytona Beach, Fla.

Among them were a broad range of Christian workers from across the country, including church planter interns birthing new congregations in pioneer areas, collegiate evangelism missionaries fostering the spread of the Gospel, and directors of missions and state convention staff members assisting local churches in church planting and evangelism.

Stewart, a painter in a car manufacturing plant before his conversion, was called to ministry within a few years of his conversion and served a number of years as a pastor and church planter.

In 1988 he became pastor of New Life Mission, where he refocused the church's ministry and developed a full-service ministry center offering food, clothing, after-school programs, and other ministries to the inner-city community.

It was in that capacity that Stewart realized a longtime dream of becoming an appointed missionary.

"Nothing greater could happen, I think, than salvation, marriage, and being a missionary," said Stewart, who was appointed earlier this year with his wife Melanie.

"It's just unreal. I knew God had called me into the ministry, but I think the appointment is extra special to me because of the years I've been in it," he said.

Laura Gilbert, a US-C/2 missionary serving two years assisting with the Christian Ministries to the United Nations Community in New York, shared how a trip to the jungles of Ecuador during her senior year of college made her re-evaluate God's call on her life.

A missionary speaking at a revival "challenged me about my salvation and the way I was living my life," and she accepted a call to missions service.



FROM BOWLING TO MINISTRY — Ron Stewart, pastor and director of New Life Baptist Mission in Hamilton, Ohio, shared his testimony during the recent commissioning service at First Church of Daytona Beach, Fla. (BP photo by James Dotson)



NEW MISSIONARIES — Jeffery and Thea Ford, resort missionaries in Gulf Shores, Ala., introduce themselves during the recent commissioning service at First Church of Daytona Beach, Fla. North American Mission Board President Robert E. "Bob" Reccord (left) was on hand to all 98 missionaries commissioned during the service. (BP photo by James Dotson)

Archaeologist announces landmark excavation

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (BP) — Renowned biblical archaeologist James Hoffmeier believes he's on to some important news concerning the Exodus, as he reported on his landmark excavation in Egypt during Midwestern Seminary's recent Sizemore Lecture Series on the school's campus in Kansas City, Mo.

Hoffmeier is the professor of Old Testament and Near Eastern History and Archaeology at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Ill.

His current project involves an archaeological dig in Egypt of significant historical and biblical proportions for this reason: "No one has ever pinpointed the three sites related to the Exodus listed in Exodus 14:2," Hoffmeier said, referring to the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt.

"The goal is to identify the route of the Exodus and to pinpoint where the parting of the sea happened," he said.

That subject is his historical and biblical passion. His most recent book is titled "Israel in Egypt: Evidence for the

Authenticity of Exodus Tradition." Hoffmeier also recently was quoted in a U.S. News & World Report article on archaeology and the Bible.

Hoffmeier and an archaeological team began digging in the spring of 2000 in Tell el-Borg, Egypt, and continued this past spring. He said Tell el-Borg might be the ancient Migdol site in Exodus 14:2.

What they found — a fort, pottery, and tombs — already is significant, he said. "Never before has anyone found fired brick from this time frame. Up until now, fired brick has only been found from as far back as the Roman period (after 63 B.C.)," Hoffmeier said.

The artifacts are consistent with the time frame of the Exodus, around the 15th to 13th century

B.C. Hoffmeier, whose project is funded by a Jewish layperson who read his book "Israel in Egypt," hopes to return to the archaeological site next spring.

The Midwestern Seminary

report included a slide show of artifacts from the site. In two previous lectures, Hoffmeier explained the relationship of history to theology and said there have been considerable attacks in the past 20 years on the historicity of the Bible, especially from Genesis to Joshua.

In the first lecture, he outlined scholars' viewpoints on the topic of whether the Bible can or cannot be used as a book of history.

In the second lecture, he used Psalm 136 as a model for explaining how theology and worship work together.

He also spoke from Gen. 12:1-3 and Ex. 1 on God's promises to his people. Throughout the lecture series, Hoffmeier referred to archaeological evidence that proves the Bible is trustworthy.

"It encourages us to believe what the Bible does say is true, and therefore, our theology, our lives, our faith can rest on a sure foundation," he said.



EXODUS REVEALED — Archaeologist James Hoffmeier of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in

Deerfield, Ill., explains his latest findings on the dig to students at Midwestern Seminary in Kansas City, Mo. (BP photo)

STORMS

It was just hours after Thanksgiving Day. Thanksgiving — that wonderful day in the year devoted only to giving thanks for the blessings of God in our lives. Sure, we have added some other features to Thanksgiving — turkey and dressing, football games, family gatherings, shopping sprees, and hunting trips — but still, at its heart, that wonderful day in November is a day to pause and give thanks.

Thanksgiving Day had just passed. Most folks had not even had time to eat all the leftovers and many were now starting to think about getting ready for Christmas.

It was early Saturday morning and life was about to change for thousands of people across the state.

The sun had not risen when the screaming sirens, announcing bad weather and even tornado activity, began to sound. Stretching all across the state, we were about to experience a version of September 11th.

It was not an attack by terrorists, but the clash of warm and cold air, creating a turbulence that would destroy homes, alter relationships, take lives, and alter the future.

You would think we would be used to storms in Mississippi, and I guess we are. During the summer months we stay alert to those huge storms that come in from the Gulf called hurricanes.

In the spring and fall, we live in the transitional period that creates those smaller, but incredibly powerful twisters that we call tornadoes.

Then, throughout the winter, we have to be mindful of those storms of ice that can turn off all the power and stop every thing dead in its tracks.

We have plenty of storms and none of us are immune from their potential harm. While we may not welcome any of these storms, maybe we could learn from them. A few lessons we might learn:

• **Prepare.** It is amazing how accurate the storm trackers are. With modern technology and pinpoint radar the weather people can tell us, to the community and even to the street, where the most severe weather is about to hit. They can't stop the weather or the storm, but if we will listen, we can prepare. That is probably the reason why more and more lives are being saved.

As the storms raked across Mississippi and destroyed hundreds of homes, family after family found safe spots in their homes that were able to protect them. Tragically, at last count, five had died in the storms and scores of others had been injured. Some of them had sought shelter, but still were unable to withstand the incredible power of the storm.

Ultimately, we must remember that the only perfect prepa-

ration is to be found in the security of an everlasting relationship with God through Jesus Christ. He makes the difference in this world and the world to come.

• **Care.** Life is so fragile and the days are so uncertain that we ought to, every moment of every day, make the most of each moment. "This is the day which the Lord has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it."

That instructive word from the Psalmist ought to linger with us when storms come and when celebrations take place. Life is a one-way journey. You don't relive a day. You only make the most of each experience.

Storms remind us that we ought to care about those things that really count. Relationships are so precious, and things and activities are so transitory.

Out of the thousands of stories that have come from the September 11 tragedy, we all have been reminded of the importance of a phone call, a caring e-mail, a final word, and the value of making each moment, each day, each hug, each expression of love, of such significance that we would not mind if it were the last remembrance.

For me personally, a special blessing came out of the tragic storm. Upon hearing that one of the storms had touched down not far from where we live, I headed out to see if there was anything I could do to help. I did not want to get in the way, but neither did I want to not respond.

After making my way around some of the neighborhoods and moving a few tree limbs, I went by to see if my daughter and her family were alright since the storm had passed close to their home. Everything was fine except they were without power.

As I started to leave, I asked if my five-year old granddaughter would like to go home with me since she was being deprived of Saturday morning cartoons. "Yes! Yes! Yes!" So, we got ready to head home. I actually thought that I would carry her by the house where her grandmother could take care of her, but Ms. Madi had other plans.

We got into the car and had barely gotten out of the driveway when she asked me what she might eat for breakfast. "I don't know. What would you like?" I asked. She then asked me, "Would you like a donut?" I responded with, "Well, would

you like one?" "I think so," she said. Then I asked, "What kind of donut would you like?" "Krispy Kreme!" was her quick reply. So, we were on our way to set up a one-person feeding station at the Krispy Kreme donut shop.

It was a special morning with a special little girl. She will remember the donuts, and I will remember her. Storms remind us to care.

• **Repair.** Storms can sure mess things up in a hurry. Some things cannot be fixed, replaced, or put back together. Folks, families, and futures have been altered, but some things can be repaired. It is at that point Mississippi Baptists stand ready at the crossroads of need to help.

Even as the storms rolled across the state, our Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief Units were poised to be in place to feed, care, and help in the name of Jesus.

It is a remarkable and constantly needed ministry made possible by the gifts of Mississippi Baptists to the Margaret Lackey State Missions Offering, and by an army of qualified, ready-to-respond volunteers.

Within hours, before sundown on Saturday, they were in place and ready to help in the process of putting life back together. Disaster relief efforts do not just happen. It takes dollars, training, equipment, and people with heart — lots of people with lots of heart!

Thank you, Mississippi Baptists, for being those kinds of people. When the skies turn dark, you bring the light of Christ to a hurting world!

Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

MADD to hold vigil in Greenville

The Mississippi chapter of Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) will hold their annual Statewide Candlelight Vigil, to memorialize the victims of drinking and driving, at 5 p.m. on December 8 at St. James Episcopal Church in Greenville.

"In the year 2000, there were 379 Mississippians killed and thousands injured due to drinking and driving," said Danny Berry, executive director for MADD in Mississippi and pastor of Galilee Church, Puckett.

Keynote speaker will be Melanie Musgrove, former first lady of Mississippi. Greenville Mayor Paul Artman and Mississippi State Senator Neely Carlton of Greenville are also on the program.

The public is invited to attend; there is no admission charge. For more information, contact MADD at (601) 939-0233.

Tests: different meanings for different people

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP) — While Southwestern Seminary students wait anxiously for test scores, young women at the Fort Worth Pregnancy Center (FWPC) wait to find out whether they passed or failed a test of a different kind.

"I think most girls come somewhat nervous," said Beverly Wilson, director of the FWPC, a Christian organization that offers free pregnancy tests, counseling, and support. The average age of her clients is between 15-25 and they come from all backgrounds, but she has met with a 12-year-old.

While the results of their pregnancy tests are life-altering, some test-takers seem more indifferent than others, Wilson said. Some high school girls think of pregnancy as a rite of passage into womanhood.

"It's not really a big deal [to them]; they come in and they are a little blasé about it," she said.

On the other hand, a college student typically comes in petrified because of the fear of losing her education and scholarship aid, Wilson said.

"We have also had a lot of Christians come in — single and married — for pregnancy tests," she said. In one extreme case, she had to counsel a girl who had been raped by her own father.

Wilson, from Nottingham, England, is enrolled in the diploma in Christian ministry program at Southwestern Seminary. Her husband, Mark, graduated in December with a master of divinity degree.

Both have served in crisis pregnancy centers in the past.

When a young woman enters the FWPC, "you don't know whether she is thinking about abortion or parenting," Wilson said. "First of all, we reassure them everything they tell us is confidential."

Then she asks them a few questions and they fill out a form, which often leads to the girls sharing their stories, Wilson said.



Wilson

At this point, God uses the staff and volunteers at FWPC to meet the specific needs of the individuals, she said, noting that she loves meeting her clients individually, many of whom are young and promiscuous.

"In a way you are calming them down, but at the same time you want to inform them [about] risks involved to their own body," Wilson said.

"We want them to feel that sense of support and love," she said, adding that everything is done in the name of Jesus Christ.

A girl who had an abortion returned to FWPC, which is unusual, Wilson said. The girl felt that she could come back to an environment in which she would be loved and supported.

Sometimes she gets frustrated with "not being able to get through to these young people," Wilson said. At the same time, she continues to love and help them with the gospel and information so that they will make good choices and change their lifestyles.

A significant challenge for the center is recruiting and training suitable volunteers, especially those with Spanish-speaking skills.

"We haven't been able to minister effectively to clients who speak Spanish," Wilson said.

The other significant challenge is that the lack of financial support for the ministry is a continual cause of concern. "Ministering at the center is a tremendous challenge, but it's great," Wilson said. "I wish more of the Christian population would realize that this is a ministry that is on the front line of evangelism every day and that pastors and congregations must be involved."

"Christians — leaders and laypeople — must speak out regarding the pro-life debate and not sit on the fence over these difficult issues," Wilson said. "We will all one day be called to give an answer before God."

JUST FOR THE RECORD



The preschool group of Evergreen Church, Louisville, recently visited the Pine Dell Farms in Starkville. Pictured (from left, front row) are Savannah Cole, Bay White, Abi McCool, Ben Johns, Samuel Cole, Tyler McCool, Ashley Malone, and Kathryn King; (back row) Kimberley King, Alexandra Cole, and Emilee Johns.

Revival date

Central, McComb: Dec. 7-9; Friday, 7 p.m.; Saturday, 6 p.m.; Sunday, 10:30 a.m. and 6 p.m.; John Yates, Enterprise, Ala., evangelist and music; Victor Walsh, interim pastor.

Carey presents A Christmas Carol musical

The William Carey College (WCC) Theatre and the School of Music will present A Christmas Carol, a musical adaptation of the Dickens classic by Michel Legrand and Sheldon Harnick, on Dec. 14 at 7 p.m. and Dec. 15 at 2 p.m. in the Saenger Theatre in downtown Hattiesburg. Following a tradition of 33 years, the production is co-sponsored by the Hattiesburg Arts Council. It is presented with the assistance of the Gannett Foundation. Regular admission is \$10, seniors and military are \$8, and students are \$5. Tickets can be purchased by calling the WCC box office at (601) 582-6221 beginning Dec. 10. There are no reserved seats. The box office is open daily from 1 until 4 p.m.

In response to an expanding MissionLab program, New Orleans Seminary (NOBTS) trustees Providence Educational Foundation's commitment to build and operate a new 32-room dormitory for MissionLab and to name the facility in honor of Nelson Price, NOBTS alumnus. Price recently retired as pastor of Roswell Street Church in Marietta, Ga., where he served for over 35 years. MissionLab is a custom-tailored program matching the needs and abilities of senior adult, student, family, and youth ministry groups with appropriate mission opportunities in the New Orleans area, and is sponsored by the Providence Learning Center (PLC), formerly known as the seminary's continuing education department. NOBTS trustees recently approved the Providence Educational Foundation and elected to pay \$250,000 towards the new student housing that was recently approved by NOBTS trustees. For more information about PLC, contact Marc Eichelberger at (800) 662-8701, ext. 3260 or visit online at www.nobts.edu/continue.



First Church, Holly Springs, recently celebrated the completion of its office and ministry complex. The complex will house the offices of the church staff. The church helps serve the physical needs of the community with a clothes closet and food pantry also located in the complex. Pictured (from left) are Maynard Teel, chairman of the board of deacons; Curtis Ferrell, pastor; and Jay McKinney, chairman of the building committee.

Oak Forest Church, Jackson, will honor Jerry and Sarah Talley for their 35th anniversary celebration on Dec. 2.

Festivities for the day will include a reunion choir at 8:30 a.m., rehearsal at 9 a.m., and singing during the 10:30 a.m. worship service. Dinner on the grounds will be served at 11:30 a.m. and a roast will begin at 1 p.m.



J. Talley



S. Talley

Jerry Talley has served as music minister, youth/activities minister, and associate pastor during his 35 years. He serves as handbell contract consultant for the church music department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB). Sarah Talley is the organist and children's choir coordinator. For 25 years, she has been the preschool/children choir contract consultant for the church music department of the MBCB. For additional information, call the church office at (601) 372-2021 or fax your reservation at (601) 372-4595. An e-mail RSVP can be sent to dcovington@oak-forestbc.com.

The choir of East Louisville Church, Louisville, will present Color it Christmas, on Dec. 9 at 11 a.m. A luncheon will follow in the family life center. The youth choir from Meadowview Church, Starkville, will present God of Wonders in the sanctuary of East Louisville Church, on Dec. 12, at 7 p.m. A worship service of candlelight carols, Scripture, and communion will be held on Dec. 24 at 5 p.m. For additional information, call (601) 773-3683 or 773-5179.



GAs of Eastside Church, Belzoni

The GAs of Eastside Church, Belzoni, recently attended Missions Madness at First Church, Natchez. Pictured (from left, front row) are Abby Roberts; Kayla Evans; Blaine Harrison; Holly Lloyd; Rachel Griffin; Jewel Abraham; Hannah Griffin; Marsha Harrison, counselor; (second row) Cindy Griffin, Karen Evans, and Denise Roberts, counselors; Michelle Evans; Kat Childress; Mallory Fisher; Mary Ashton Evans; Spencer Griffin; Lauren Ashford; Mary Elizabeth Broadway; and Karen Ellison, counselor.

Liberty Church, Liberty, will present The Road to Bethlehem, a musical drama,

Dec. 9 at 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. It is under the direction of Danny Von Kanel, minister of music. Martin Hayden is pastor.

A Holiday to Remember will be presented at Flowood Church, Flowood, Dec. 7 and Dec. 8 at 7 p.m.; and Dec. 9 at 6 p.m. Danny Brock is minister of worship and ministries. G. R. "Ricky" Gray is pastor.

Algoma Church, Algoma, will have its tenth annual drive-through Nativity on Dec. 14, and Dec. 15, from 6-9:30 p.m. It will consist of five scenes portraying the birth of Jesus. For additional information, call the church at (662) 489-5846.



Drew Church, Drew, celebrated its 25th anniversary of the Extra Youthful Zest (XYZ) on Oct. 25. There were 66 present at the first meeting on Oct. 28, 1976, and about 36 members meet now. Allen House is the new pastor.

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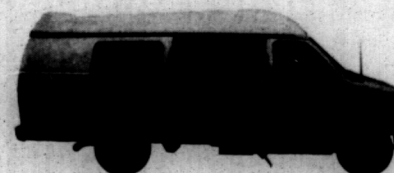
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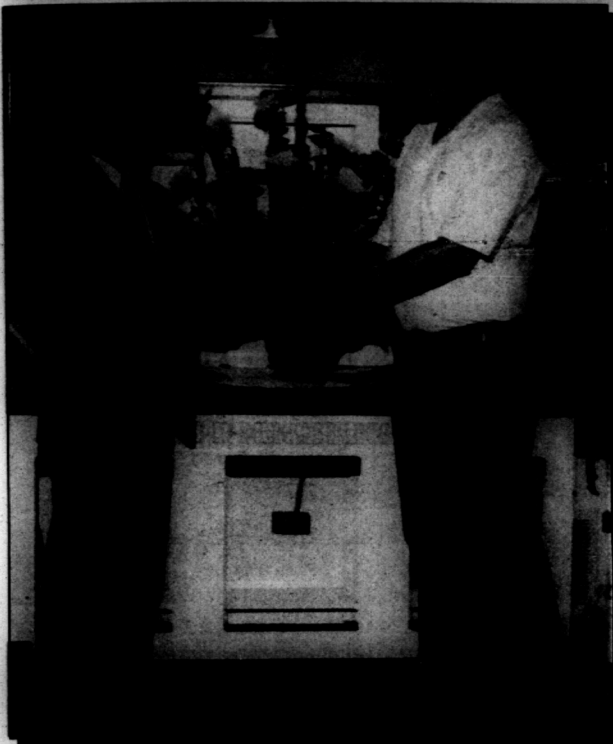
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NAMES IN THE NEWS



Pickett and Baggett

Wayne Baggett has recently retired from teaching the college and career class at Harmony Church, New Albany. He retires after 30 years teaching with perfect attendance. Pictured (from left) are Bobby Pickett, Sunday School director, and Baggett.

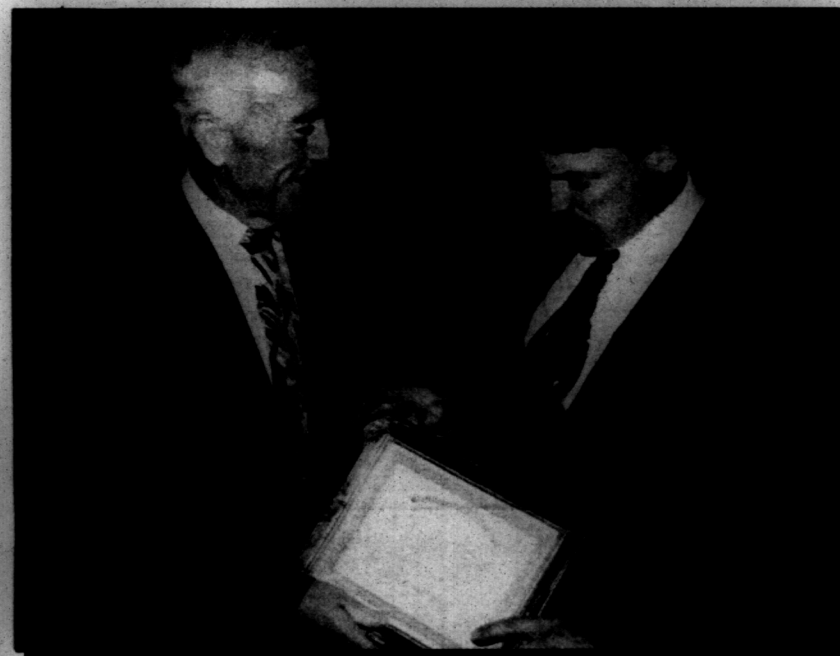
Cash Church, Lena, has called Timothy R. Mowdy as pastor. His ordination council and service was conducted Oct. 7 at Poplar Springs Church, Newton, where he served as deacon, Sunday School teacher, and youth teacher. Pictured (from left) are Mike Everett, missions director for Newton/Scott Associations; Mowdy; and Charles Bonner, pastor of Poplar Springs Church.



Everett, Mowdy, and Bonner

Lane Varner, staff evangelist at Davis Road Church, Byram,

was ordained to the ministry on Oct. 7. He currently serves as minister at Willow Creek Retirement Center in Byram and is available for service elsewhere. Varner is a graduate of Mississippi State University. Pictured (from left) are Ricky Summers, pastor; and Varner.



Summers and Varner

New Hope Church, Foxworth, ordained Lance Newman and Kenneth Stringer as deacons on Sept. 30. Pictured (from left) are Hiram Campbell, interim pastor; Newman; Stringer; and Sherman Pounds, chairman of deacons.



Campbell, Newman, Stringer, and Pounds

Unity Church, Pascagoula, licensed Jared Williams to the ministry on July 29. Ken Hembree, pastor, presented Williams with the license. Pictured (from left) are Williams and Hembree.



Williams and Hembree



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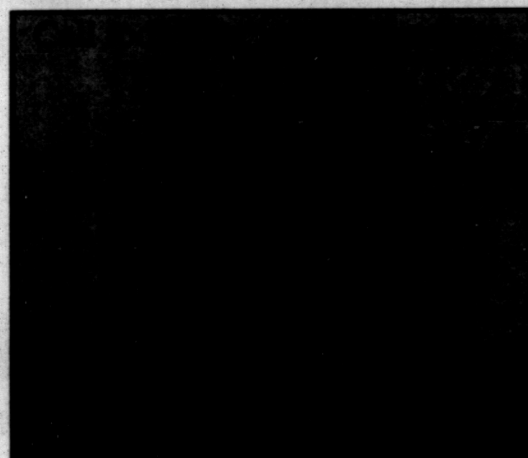
1. Lord, I admit that I need you.
(*I have sinned.*)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death.
(*I repent.*)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you.
(*I believe in Jesus.*)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with him.
(*I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.*)

But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name (John 1:12).

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

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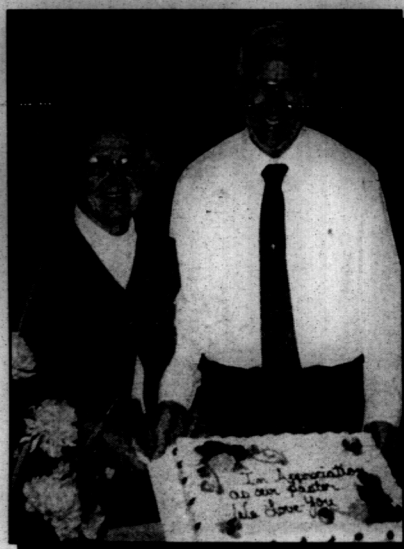


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Ammon, Bush, Ivy, and Williams

A. R. Windham, pastor of Enon Church, Bay Springs, was honored on Pastor Appreciation Day, Oct. 17. He is pictured with his wife Ann.



The Windhams



Tim Tubby was licensed to preach Oct. 28 by East Philadelphia Church, Philadelphia. Tubby is available for preaching engagements and can be reached through the church office at (601) 656-4797. Pictured with Tubby (left) is Dwight Faulkenbery, pastor.

Miss. FAITH clinics set for January, April

LifeWay Christian Resources in Nashville has announced two FAITH Evangelism strategy clinics set for Mississippi in 2002. The first will be January 15-17 at the Colonial Heights Church in Jackson. The second will be April 18-20 at First Church, Saltillo.

These training events are for pastors and other key leaders who desire to be trained in the FAITH Evangelism strategy. To register, call LifeWay Christian Resources at (800) 254-2022.

FAITH is an ongoing, comprehensive evangelism, ministry, and assimilation strategy that functions through Sunday School. Participants learn a simple yet powerful Gospel presentation, then visit prospects and members for their own class or department. To learn more about FAITH:

- Plan to attend the FAITH Awareness Meeting January 31 at First Church, Saltillo. This Awareness meeting will be held from 7-9 p.m. and will be instrumental in reaching pastors who are bivocational or who are working with smaller churches.

The April clinic in Saltillo is a first for Mississippi in that it is designed for bivocational pastors. While churches of all sizes may participate, the schedule is arranged so that pastors who hold multiple jobs may still attend the clinic.

The Awareness meeting will help answer any questions about the clinic, as well as how to implement the FAITH strategy in the local church. The Awareness meeting is free of charge.

Call LifeWay toll free at 1-800-324-6438 or visit their web site at www.lifeway.com/sundayschool/faith.

Fellowship Church, Meridian, ordained Jake Ammon, Jamey Bush, and Danny Ivy on Oct. 14 as new deacons. Pictured (from left) are Ammon, Bush, Ivy and Jimmy Williams, pastor.

Low-tech water purification leads to unreached

TAMBI, Cote d'Ivoire (BP) — The man looks skeptically at the clear plastic water bottle and can of black paint sit on the ground. He knows there is no way these two simple things are going to make his family healthier, but he's willing to try anything. Too many people are dying.

Philip Moore, a Baptist volunteer from Bethel Springs, Tenn., squats on the ground and demonstrates how to paint the bottle. He makes clean strokes from the lip to the bottom, careful to paint only half of the bottle.

After filling the bottle with water, it is placed in the sun, paint side down.



WATER OF LIFE — An unidentified Baptist volunteer teaches villagers in Tambi, Ivory Coast, a low-tech way to sterilize their drinking water and keep many people from dying of waterborne diseases. In the process, members of the unreached Nafana people group saw the love of God in action and learned about the Living Water. (BP photo)

The next day, the man grabs the water bottle, points inside and says, "It works. Look at all those dead mosquito larvae floating inside. Nothing was in that water yesterday when I filled it. The sun really does kill the microbes."

Moore smiles as he examines the bottle. "Just think what would be in your stomach if you hadn't put your water out in the sun," he replies. "You would be sick with diarrhea, but now your body will get healthy."

Volunteers from Macedonia Church in Springfield, Mo.; First Church in Murphy, N.C.; and First Church in Bethel Springs, Tenn., joined Baptist workers in a special water project reaching Tambi village, where 7,000 members of the Nafana people group live.

Volunteers taught a simple water treatment method called solar water disinfection (SODIS). It uses sunlight to destroy micro-organisms that cause waterborne diseases.

The volunteers take every opportunity to tell the Nafana stories about Jesus Christ. They pray these things, not knowing that a member of the Nafana village council had long ago placed a curse to keep out white men and their influence.

"We know how much you love us because you have worked every day, even during the hottest time with the sun beating down upon you," the chief says.

"You did all this to help my people," the chief points out.

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UNIQUE COMBINATION

Editor:

Perkinston Church in Gulf Coast Association has a unique ministry opportunity for the right person. The church is searching for someone to fill the position of minister of music and worship on a part-time basis. The church property is located adjacent to Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College's Perkinston campus, which is need of a Baptist Student Union associate director.

The two ministry positions could effectively be merged into one very compatible

ministry with a competitive full-time salary/support package. If you have that unique combination of music and worship leadership skills plus a desire to relate with and minister to college students, we would love to talk with you.

Please call me at (601) 928-7532 at church or (601) 928-3423 at home. Send e-mail messages to

Jimthrash@cs.com or mail resumes to Perkinston Baptist Church, P.O. Box 263, Perkinston, MS 39573.

Jim P. Thrash, pasfor
Perkinston Church
Perkinston

GOSPEL IS TRUTH

Editor:

We hear the remark, "It's the Gospel truth." That is just what the Gospel is — truth. We have heard, "He really preached the Gospel." We pray he did. The Gospel is God speaking to man. The Gospel has no variance.

It's the Gospel that brings man to the Savior. God calls me to share the Gospel with lost people. The Gospel does not come just from the pulpit. It is shared by one witness to another person.

We are God's only messengers to man. We are called to let our light so shine that others might see Christ in us. Life is so short,

and eternity is forever. Only in this short time on earth will we be able to give our witness.

The Gospel lets others see Jesus in us. We as Christians are to hunger after reaching lost loved ones, neighbors, and our neighbors' children. The Gospel is the light of Jesus shining through us.

It was once said that the time will come when man can't stand sound Gospel. God never intended for his church to turn into a side show, as we are hearing about some churches. Lord, just lead us by your precious hand — the Gospel way.

Tom Walden
Jackson

JUST FOR THE RECORD



Youth group of Pine Grove Church, Union

The youth group of Pine Grove Church, Union (pictured), recently held a retreat at the KOA campgrounds in Toomsba. Pictured are the youth and adult leaders.

The RAs of Corinth Church, Purvis (pictured), participated in the mission project, Operation Christmas Child, by preparing 25 boxes for children around the world.



RAs of Corinth Church, Purvis

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CENTREVILLE BAPTIST CHURCH is seeking a full-time minister of education and youth. MRE degree required and some experience preferred. Church has new education facilities, family life center, and provides excellent benefits and salary package. Send resumes to Centreville Baptist Church, P.O. Box 326, Centreville, AL 35042.

HISTORIC FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH Tusculumbia, Ala., is seeking a pastor. Send recommendations or resume to Jerry Wages, c/o FBC, 203 North Dickson Street, Tusculumbia, AL 35674; call (256) 383-1515; or fax (256) 383-8713.

PRESCHOOL/CHILDREN'S MINISTER POSITION. We are a church running 800 in worship service seeking a minister to preschoolers and children. We are located in a fast-growing medium-sized city in the heart of Arkansas. Seminary training and experience preferred. Send resume to Second Baptist Church, Attn: Stephanie Crockett, 701 Polk St., Conway, AR 72032.

SEEKING: DYNAMIC, GROWING, SOUTHERN BAPTIST CHURCH in Northern Kentucky is seeking a full-time Minister of Preschool/Children. Strong organizational and management skills and a desire to be a part of a strong ministry team are required. Please send resume to: Florence Baptist Church, PO Box 456, Florence, KY, 41022-0456, ATTN: Karen Byrd or email to ksbfinsec@zoomtown.

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Ludlow Church, Ludlow, hosted a late night youth service. Pictured are the youth choir. Shaun Selman is minister of youth at First Church, Petal.

PART-TIME YOUTH MINISTER for Rankin County Church; pay \$600-\$800 a month; P.O. Box 5467, Pearl, MS 39208.

CHURCH AVERAGING 100 in Sunday School seeks full-time associate pastor/minister of music and youth. Please send resume to Calvary Baptist Church, 2878 Old Hwy. 27, Vicksburg, MS 39180; or fax to (601) 636-7574.

ADATON BAPTIST CHURCH IN STARKVILLE is seeking a full-time secretary. Must have computer skills. Send resume to Adaton Baptist Church, 1975 Highway 82 West, Starkville, MS 39759; or call (662) 323-3735.

ANTIOCH BAPTIST CHURCH, BRANDON, is seeking a minister of music. The church is located on Highway 43 South between Pelahatchie and Puckett. Please submit resume to: Antioch Baptist Church, 2350 Highway 43 South, Brandon, MS 39042.

CHURCH IN JACKSON suburban area is prayerfully seeking a full-time youth minister. If you feel God may be leading you to this ministry opportunity, please send your resume and letter of interest to: Search Committee, Briar Hill Baptist Church, P.O. Box 429, Florence, MS 39073; or fax (601) 845-0991.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Unsigned letters will not be printed. No multi-copy or form letters will be used.

Each correspondent must include an address and telephone number for verification. In special instances, name may be withheld at writer's request and editor's discretion.

Please include the name of cooperating Mississippi Baptist church where correspondent is a member. (Mississippi Baptists' letters will receive priority when space is limited.)

Letters must be limited to 250 words. All correspondence is subject to editing.

Correspondents should refrain from personal attacks. The opinions expressed in letters to the editor do not necessarily reflect the views of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

No more than one letter from any individual will be printed during a three-month period.

When in the judgement of the editor a given issue has received sufficient attention, correspondence dealing with it will no longer be published and a notice will be printed to that effect.

FAMILY BIBLE STUDY

The message of Christmas

Galatians 3:26-4:7

By J. Michael Barnett

"Woe to you," is not a greeting that one usually hears in the month of December. Custom and kindness dictate that we speak a blessing such as, "Merry Christmas," or "Happy Holidays." People want to hear greetings of celebration rather than groans of condemnation.

It was condemnation that the churches in Galatia were hearing. Not long after Paul established the Galataian churches the Judaizers stepped in with their heresy. "Gentiles must become Jews in order to be saved and the Jewish law must be kept."

This message heaped condemnation upon the people of God. Paul uses the incarnation of Christ, the Christmas mes-

sage, to emphasize that redemption through Christ is by grace alone.

The law is God's standard. In Galatians 3:24, Paul declares that the law has no saving power. Its purpose is to teach us our need for salvation.

Paul uses the word "schoolmaster;" it is the Greek word "paidagogos," or a tutor. The reference is to a slave employed in Greek or Roman families whose duty was to supervise boys in behalf of their parents.

They escorted the boys to and from school and taught them the ways of manhood with culture and discipline. The tutor exacted punishment as well. When the boy grew into manhood the "paidagogos" changed roles, he no longer had authority over the child (see Gal. 4:1-3).

The law teaches us that we are sinners. When Jesus saved us, the law had no more authority. Its purpose was fulfilled. To teach that Gentiles must become Jews to be saved is therefore heretical. "We are all the children of God" through Christ alone (Gal. 3:6).

God has set the standard, teaching us that we cannot meet the standard and the standard of the law cannot save. Therefore, a Savior is needed.

God's sovereignty is declared in Galatians 4:4, by the statement, "when in the fullness of time was come, God sent forth his Son." God orchestrated history so Jesus would be born at the perfect moment.

Religiously, it was perfect timing because the Jews had forsaken idolatry during the Babylonian captivity. Synagogues had been developed giving Jesus a platform from which to speak to the nation. Politically, Rome had unified the known world and provided roads and stability

that enabled the ministry of Christ to expand.

Greek was the common language; therefore all classes of people heard the message of Jesus. This culture provided an environment in which Jesus could work his mighty deeds and declare the Gospel.

God's Savior came in God's time in a very unique way. Verse 4 draws attention to two truths that establish the message of Christmas. First, Jesus was "made of woman."

This statement affirms Jesus' humanity and speaks to the virgin birth. Isaiah 7:14 tells us that the King of Israel would be born of a virgin, and Matthew and Luke declare the virginity of Mary. Without a virgin born savior, the grace of God would have no power. Christmas would have no message.

Second, the text says that Jesus was "made under the law." Jesus was under obligation to the law. Unlike other Jews, Jesus obeyed it. He fulfilled it. He did so vicariously. He met God's standard for us

who cannot. He satisfied God's standard. That is why God in his sovereignty was able to send his savior to give salvation.

God's salvation is the message of Christmas. Two words in verse five speak salvation's blessings. The word "redeem" refers to a slave being purchased and consequently being set free. Without Christ men are bound to the law, in Christ the believer is set free from the laws condemnation.

Adoption is the act of God in which he makes believers members of his family. Upon our adoption, we stand as adult sons with all privileges and blessings. One such blessing is the personal and precious relationship with God the Father (Gal. 4:6).

The bondage of salvation by works is a "woe unto you" greeting. The message of Christmas is that Jesus fulfilled God's standard and God is satisfied with him. He is satisfied with us who are in Christ.

Barnett is pastor of First Church, Ocean Springs.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

God of the covenant

Deuteronomy 2:1-3; 14, 15, 32, 33; 3:3-4

By Carleen McGraw

Since earliest times, Moses has been held to be the author of Deuteronomy, as well as the books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers that relate the story of how the children of Israel left their land of Canaan, and fled to Egypt because of a great famine.

When Joseph's father and brothers and their families came to Egypt for food, Joseph settled them — 70 in number at the time — in the richest pasture land in Egypt where they lived and enjoyed God's blessings for many years.

Later, Egyptian kings made them slaves and for some 400 years God's people had served the Egyptians in slavery.

God had not forgotten his people; when he heard their cries of anguish, he chose Moses to lead them out of Egypt and back to the Promised Land.

Moses was 80 years old when he accepted God's call, and through miraculous signs and wonders from God that eventually left the land of Egypt desolate, Moses under God's direction led his people out of Egypt. Moses' farewell speeches in Deuteronomy reminds the people of God's commands, his laws, and his faithfulness in bringing them to this point in the journey.

He remembers when they were safely out of Egypt and had reached Kadesh Barnea, he had told them that the Lord had given them the Promised

Land, and he said, "Go up and take possession of it as the Lord, the God of your fathers, told you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged" (1:21b).

The people decided they needed more information, and twelve spies — one from each tribe — were sent to check out the land. The spies brought back glowing reports of all the wonders and goodness of the land of Canaan.

Two of the spies — Joshua and Caleb — declared that with God's help they could take the land (Num. 13:30-14:38). Ten spies saw all the good things, but they also saw the people of the land as giants who would surely destroy the Israelites.

The majority ruled, and because of their lack of faith that God was able to give them the land and their fear of the inhabitants, they convinced the people they should not move forward and take the land. Because of their decision, God sentenced all those above 20 years of age — with the exception of Joshua and

Caleb — to desert wanderings until they died.

Forty years have passed and now God is ready for this new generation to go up and take the land. Moses is now 120 years old. Moses told them that in reaching the Promised Land, they would go through "the territory of your brothers the descendants of Esau" (2:8), and the land of the Ammonites (2:19) that he had given to the descendants of Lot.

Moses encouraged Joshua, who according to God's instructions would take over the leadership role, to remember "all that the Lord your God has done to these two kings," and assured him that "the Lord himself will fight for you" (3:22). Moses was to commission, encourage, and strengthen Joshua whom God had chosen "for he will lead this people across and will cause them to inherit the land you will see" (3:28b).

So, you are saying: "What does all this Old Testament history have to do with me in this

modern 21st century?" If you are a Christian, you are now a part of God's covenant people.

He provides fresh opportunities every day for you to hear and obey his commands. He has promised to be with you as you seek to know and do his will.

You may not win every battle; sometimes you may even fail completely, but he is right beside you, he will forgive you; he has promised that he will not leave you or forsake you.

Just as he gave his people direction in Moses' day, he gave his people in the first century directions to "go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always to the very end of the age" (Matt. 28:19, 20 NIV).

This is still God's command to his 21st century covenant people!

McGraw is a member of First Church, Louisville.

Guidelines for submitting news and photographs

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be either (a) typewritten, (b) news printed on 3 1/2 by 11-inch paper, or (c) news printed on standardized forms provided by the convention. All articles must be submitted in duplicate. No articles will be accepted without a return address.

News items should be submitted to the editor, The Baptist Record, 531 N. Main St., P.O. Box 531, Ocean Springs, AL 36605. Phone: (205) 871-1111. Fax: (205) 871-1112.



no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments are permissible.

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Photographs may be color or black and white. Instant photos and digital printouts are not reproducible. Digital photos may be used if submitted via e-mail. All photos must be sharp and clear.

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PRACTICAL PRINCIPLES



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The Clobots Are Coming! The Clobots Are Coming! Bioethical Dilemmas for the 21st Century

By Lee Yancey

With the advent of advanced robotic technologies and the eminence of the announcement of the first cloned human being, one has to be concerned with what will happen next.

Scientists have created a robotic system that can for the first time design and construct other robots.¹ The parent unit would design, build, and deploy its children robots for specific cleaning tasks.

The question one needs to consider is how long will it be before the robot can design not just smaller units, but an actual replica of itself?

Then how long until it starts improving upon its own design? And how long before these continually self-producing and self-improving robot engineers, start looking a bit critically at the inefficiencies, flaws, and all too static design of the human body?²

Bill Joy, co-founder of Sun Microsystems, gave a speech at a symposium titled "Will Spiritual Robots Replace Humanity by 2100?" Although this writer disagrees with his assessment that robots could be spiritual, his ideas were interesting and disturbing.

Joy recommends that we stop and recognize the dangers of democratizing the availability of self-replicating (i.e. potentially out of control) technologies. He contends that unchecked use of self-replicating technologies could lead to genocide or extinction.

In the 20th century, the nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons were our biggest threats — yet these were controlled by the defense departments of a handful of countries.

In the 21st century, Joy anticipates that our biggest threats will be from genetic engineering, nanotechnology, and robotics.³

Many disagree with Joy's assessment of the gravity of the new technologies;

however, one would be prudent to be aware of what could be coming.

From a practical standpoint, robots could be used to design robots that help in factories, clean up polluted lakes and rivers, or vacuum a home.⁴

Hollywood, in our generation, has evolved its use of robotics from Rosie, the robot housekeeper from *The Jetsons* to the much more fearsome *Terminator* who seemed to be part human and part robot.

The Six Million-Dollar-Man, through the use of bionics, was able to perform superhuman feats. While it all seemed like fantasy at the time, it is now

becoming a stark reality which Christians must not ignore. At what point does a person cease to be human?

Before September 11, 2001, the media was fervently covering the stem

cell and cloning debate throughout our country and the world.

While cloning has been outlawed in the United States, two physicians plan to clone a human in less than two years.

Panos Zavos runs a fertility clinic in Lexington, Kentucky, (he has since left the country) and controversial Italian fertility doctor Severino Antinori helps post-menopausal women bear children.

Many doctors believe they will succeed, but at what cost? There is an abundance of evidence that cloning adult animals both endangers the mother and can lead to unacceptable defects in the offspring.

Over 90% of surrogate mothers, with cloned embryos implanted inside them, miscarry early in the pregnancy. The placenta doesn't develop properly many times, and the fetus does not get enough oxygen or nutrition causing under-developed lungs and failing hearts.

Some cattle have been born with deformed heads. To ignore these outcomes is criminally irresponsible according to Harry Griffin of Scotland's Roslin Institute, the lab that introduced Dolly in 1997.⁵

Cloning raises to a higher pitch the issue of when life begins. One church statement declares, "Each of

the embryos is a human being simply by dint of its genetic makeup."⁶

Cloning requires the creation of many embryos before one emerges that meets the parameters of scientific progress. The others are extinguished. Is this murder? This writer shouts a resounding YES!

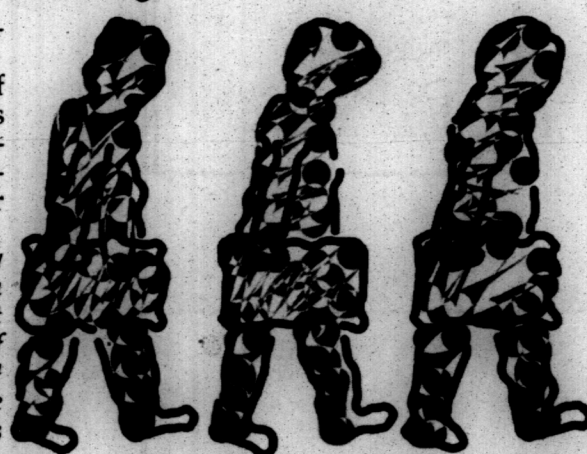
Nigel Cameron penned, *Tragically the last century and a half has been marred by numerous atrocities against vulnerable human beings in the name of progress and medical benefit. In the 19th century, vulnerable human beings were bought and sold in the town-square as slaves and bred as though they were animals. In this century, the vulnerable were executed mercilessly and subjected to demeaning experimentation at Dachau and Auschwitz. At mid-century, the vulnerable were subjects of our own government's radiation experiments without their knowledge or consent. Likewise, vulnerable African-Americans in Tuskegee, Alabama, were victimized as subjects of a government sponsored research project to study the effects of syphilis. Currently we are witnesses to a gross abuse of mental patients used as subjects in purely experimental research. These experiments allow the rights of the few to be sacrificed for the potential benefit to the many. These unspeakably cruel and inherent-*

*ly wrong acts against human beings have resulted in the enactment of laws and policies which require the protection of human rights and liberties, including the right to be protected from the tyranny of the quest for scientific progress.*⁷

The devaluation of human life involved in cloning and embryonic stem cell research is juxtaposed against the value being placed on individual human body parts. Life as a whole is worth less while its physical components are worth much more.

A human egg can be worth tens of thousands of dollars. A particularly interesting human gene can be worth billions. Models have set prices for their eggs, sold on the Internet, at between \$15,000 and \$150,000.

However, the commercial interest in human tissue extends beyond celebrity allure. Body parts are bought and sold for medical research, diagnostics, and therapies. They are marketed to museums and personal collectors of skulls, bones, and physical anomalies.



Also, pieces of people are increasingly being used as raw materials for products — from placenta-enriched shampoos to experimental DNA-run computers.⁸

Is bioethics worthwhile? Is it an activity that Christians should pay heed? We are not "of the world" but we are "in the world" and have a responsibility to be salt and light to our neighbors on this globe.

The idea of super robots and clones or the combination of the two is frightening. Yet while we do not know what our future on earth holds, we can rest assured that we know who holds the future.

¹ "Chat on this: Are Self-replicating Robots a Good Idea?" www.techtv.com by Josh Lawrence, August 31, 2000.

² Ibid.

³ "Will Spiritual Robots Replace Humanity?" www.realityshifters.com by Cynthia Sue Larson, August 8, 2000.

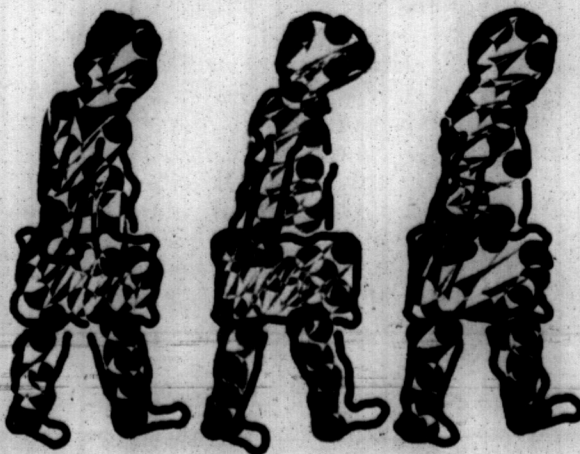
⁴ John Farrell, "The Monster from... Waltham: Robots who can create robots? That's right." www.nationalreview.com, September 1, 2000.

⁵ Nell Boyce, "Multiplicity's Perils," *U.S. News and World Report*, March 19, 2001, p.43.

⁶ Dwight A. Moody, "To Clone or Not to Clone: What Saith the Commandments?" *Christian Ethics Today*, Volume 7, Number 5, October 2001, p.19.

⁷ Nigel Cameron and others, "The Ethics of Human Embryonic Stem Cell Research." www.bannerofttruth.co.uk.

⁸ Lori Andrews and Dorothy Nelkin, *Body Bazaar: The Market for Human Tissue in the Biotechnology Age*. New York: Crown Publishers, 2001, pp. 24-25.



If you are interested in receiving Christian Action updates via the internet and will share this information with friends and your church, please e-mail us at riia@wood-mbch.org. Include your name, address, phone number, and church name.

Note to relief workers starts blessing cycle

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP) — A father, mother, and three small children add up to a family of five, but in the world's eyes the Richas probably aren't large enough or rich enough or famous enough to make a difference.

Yet, faced with the greatest tragedy of this generation — Sept. 11 — this family felt it needed to do something, anything, to help, no matter how little.

So Karen Richa, the mother and a bus driver from Attleboro, Mass., loaded up her kids the Friday following the attack and headed to Wal-Mart. They bought what they could afford: bottled water, first aid supplies, anything that might aid the relief effort.

Brad Hughes, a student at Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky., who helped with disaster relief in Manhattan, didn't know the Richas' story when he first found their card. He just saw the signatures and a heart-felt word of appreciation.

Hughes unearthed the card while he and the other Southern Seminary volunteers were digging through piles of toilet paper, paper towels, and other donated items at a Red Cross warehouse in September.

The monotonous labor and 12-hour shifts were proving arduous and thankless, but the bright blue lettering of the Richas' card grabbed Hughes' attention. So did the message

inside: "God bless all who help," with four signatures from Karen Richa, Amanda, 9, Joshua, 8, and Kaylee, 2.

"That [card] was an absolutely incredible encouragement to everybody who was there. You work and work and work and [then] you get something like that, and you realize that people are praying for you and that people care."

Hughes sent a thank-you letter to the editor to the Attleboro Sun Chronicle. He wrote in part: "I am not sure if they [the Richas] will see this. They may never know how they encouraged us. I just wanted to make an effort to thank them from the bottom of my heart for their card."

They did see it. In a lengthy letter that Karen Richa sent to Hughes, she described the scene.

"It was Oct. 11, exactly one month after [the tragedy]. I'm waiting for the kids to get off the bus. She [the bus driver] arrives and Amanda and Joshua come yelling off the bus, 'Mom! Mom! We're in the paper!'"

Hughes was surprised to receive a response. "It's unbelievable the turn of events," he said. "I honestly didn't think I'd ever get anything back from them."

She wrote, "It was a sign from God just confirming to me —

'Yes, Karen, you were right. Big and small, it makes all the difference.' And for my kids I know it meant so much to them. They were so excited. I said, 'See, kids, you cheered someone up.' They were ecstatic! So I had to write."

The cycle of blessing continues. Hughes shared the story at First Church, Henryville, Ind., where he serves as interim music minister. That Sunday, the worship theme was servanthood.

During the service, the church caught the vision. The pastor took up a love offering and raised \$250 to send to the Richas as a "thank you" for their sacrifice.

"I thought that was amazing that it's going so far that a small church in Indiana that the

Richas have never heard of is doing what they can to help out with a family that made a sacrifice," Hughes said.

For Hughes, the providential sequence of events just shows that anyone — even an average family of five from an average town — can make a difference.

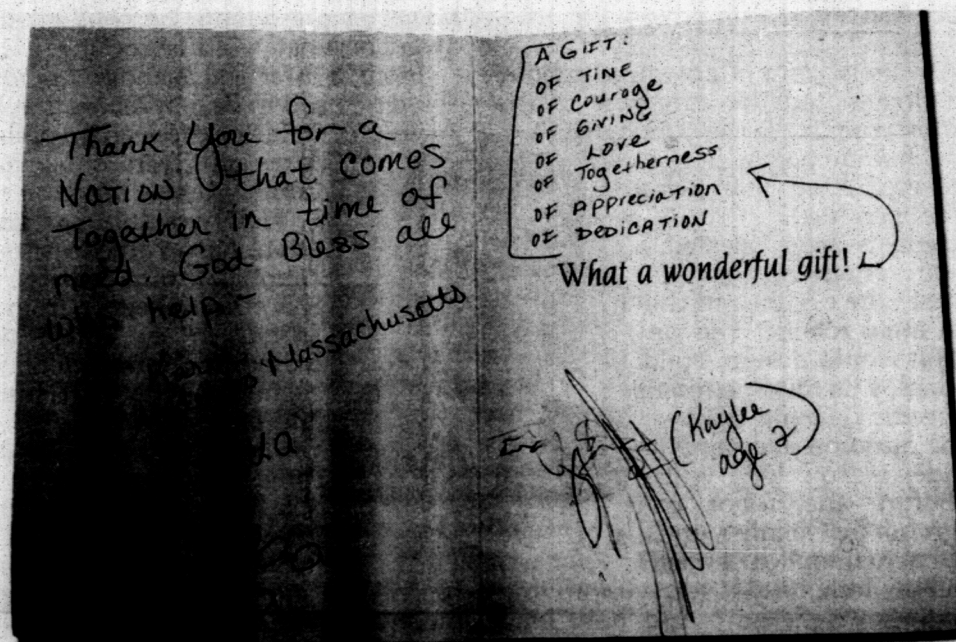
As Karen Richa wrote, "Brad, I wanted my kids to know that everyone in this world can make a difference. If you don't have money, then maybe you have time."

"I knew at the time that [the children] probably didn't fully understand that they can make a difference. But I knew that I taught them a valuable lesson that day — one they'll remember their entire lives."

Thank You So Much



CARD OF APPRECIATION — After purchasing some supplies for the Red Cross, Karen Richa and her three children of Attleboro, Mass., wrote words inside this card to voice thanks to New York relief workers. (BP photo)



WORDS OF THANKS — Karen Richa and her three children of Attleboro, Mass., signed a thank-you card to New York relief workers. The card's discovery in New York City by Brad Hughes, a volunteer from Southern Seminary, prompted his efforts to voice thanks to the family. (BP photo)

Bibliocipher

By Charles Marx
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UAK EWNLN NUHK LAXT
XRWS, H US XRW VPWUK
TJ OHJW; RW XRUX
ITSWXR XT SW NRUOO
AWZWP RLAYWP; UAK
RW XRUX VHOHWZWR
TA SW XRUOO AWZWP
XRHPNX.

ETRA NHB: XRHPXQ-JHZW

Clue: H = I

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Luke Six: Thirty-Five.

B&H to publish September 11 Kennedy sermons

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — While it will never rival a pocket New Testament for witnessing, D. James Kennedy's tiny new book, "Why was America Attacked?" packs a lot of evangelistic punch in its 64 pages.

Today, people are asking questions about God for different reasons, and Kennedy, pastor of the 10,000-member Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., tries to answer them in his book released on fast track by Broadman & Holman Publishers (B&H) in late October.

Based on a sermon Kennedy delivered just after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, the book addresses such questions as:

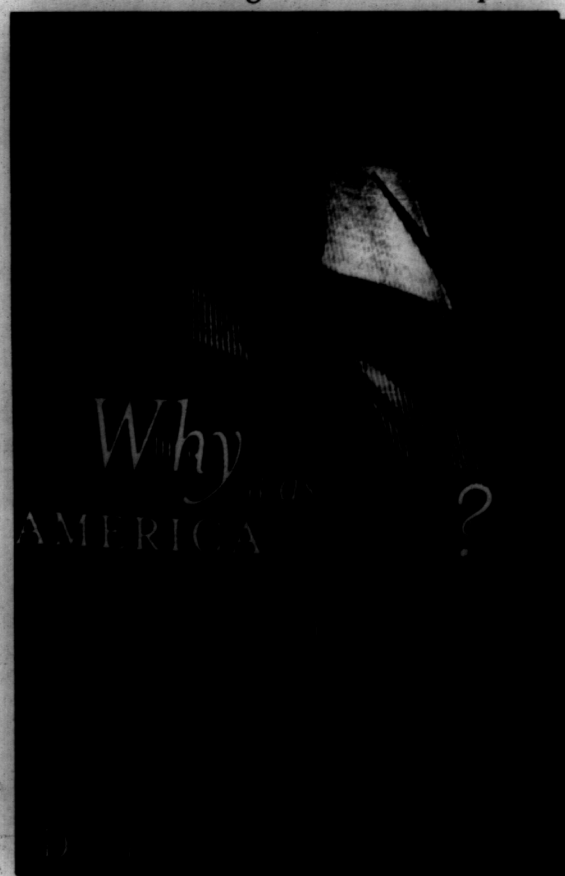
- Why did God allow this to happen?
- Can we ever feel safe again?
- How should Christians respond?
- Can good come out of this tragedy?
- Is this attack a judgment from God?

Kennedy's weekly messages to his congregation are heard in 30,000 cities across the United States and in various parts of the world, including the former Soviet Union and the Middle East, via radio and television.

"The book provides comfort, direction, and encouragement to Christians and reminds us that the two most important questions we can answer are, 'Do you know you are going to heaven?' and 'Why should God let you in?'" said Ken

Stephens, president of B&H, the trade publishing arm of LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention.

As a witnessing tool, it's not a pocket



New Testament, but it does answer some questions people are asking — questions that might ultimately lead to people accepting Christ, Stephens said.

"There is enough room in your pocket or handbag to carry both the Here's Hope New Testament and Kennedy's book," he said. "Then you should be prepared for almost any question."

In the book, Kennedy uses what the Bible says about eternal life to encourage people who have not accepted Christ to call on him to help them through this tragedy.

"We believe that at such times as this there are fantastic opportunities to proclaim the gospel," he writes.

As far as America's future, Kennedy said he hopes the attacks have changed the country forever.

"I hope it will be different in that the hearts of the people of this country will once more be drawn to God, and that there will be a spiritual revival, and that we will turn from our wicked ways ... and that there will be a great moral improvement in this country," he writes.

"It is my prayer that this heinous act may be used of God to bring about a great spiritual revival."

Why was America Attacked? Answers for a Nation at War, can be purchased at LifeWay Christian Stores or any Christian bookstore.